

PUBLIC HEALTH 3.0

Nashville, Tennessee

Highlights



June 14, 2016

As part of the implementation of Public Health 3.0, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) is hosting a series of listening sessions to learn about the challenges and opportunities experienced by local public health entities in their work to promote healthier communities.

The meetings also spotlight local public health innovations, creating a valuable opportunity for community leaders to collaborate and develop strategies to improve public health. Below you'll find highlights from the Nashville meeting, which took place on June 14, 2016.

Public Health Infrastructure

Public health is governed at the county level by the Metro Public Health Department (MPHD). MPHD's mission is to protect, improve, and sustain the health and well-being of all people in metropolitan Nashville — and it places a strong emphasis on health equity.

MPHD strives to make the healthy choice the easy choice for all residents of Nashville and Davidson County. MPHD's dedication to healthy community design is evident in their department headquarters, the [Lentz Public Health Center](#). The Lentz Public Health Center was designed to support environmental sustainability and promote physical activity for its employees, and it features a public health clinic with a wide range of services.

Health Problems and Challenges

The "Big Three plus One" behaviors — excessive caloric intake, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and other substance abuse — are the main drivers of disease and death in Davidson County.

What is Public Health 3.0?

Public Health 3.0 is a challenge to business leaders, community leaders, state lawmakers, and federal policymakers to incorporate health into all areas of governance.

Davidson County Fast Facts

Population: 678,889

Median Income: \$47,4342

Median Age: 34.2

Sources:

- Vintage 2015 Population Estimates
- 2010–2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
In conjunction with the Metro Public Health Department

Almost 20% of the population of Davidson County lives in poverty, which means residents are at risk for shorter, less healthy lives than people who live in other, more prosperous areas of the nation.

Health Outcomes

According to the [County Health Rankings](#), Davidson County ranks **13th** out of 95 counties in Tennessee for overall health outcomes. However, the county ranks **33rd** out of 95 counties for health behaviors — and ranks more poorly than the national average in obesity, physical inactivity, and alcohol and other substance use.

Davidson County is also located within a number of “belts” present in the U.S., including the:

- **Diabetes belt:** 12% of adults in this region have diabetes
- **Stroke belt:** 35% of adults in this region have high blood pressure
- **Obesity belt:** 29% of this region’s population is obese

Even though Davidson County is known as a mecca of health care — the “Silicon Valley of health,” with \$70–80 billion in health care revenue — state and local leaders know there’s a lot left to do to improve their county’s health.

Bright Spots of Innovation

State and local leaders are hopeful that various key players will partner to improve health outcomes in Davidson County. For example:

- The [Healthy Nashville Leadership Council](#), facilitated by MPH, brings together representatives from across the city to create and implement a strategic Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The plan lays out strategies and measures to improve the area’s health status by advancing health equity, maximizing built and natural environments, and supporting mental and emotional health.
- [NashvilleHealth](#) is a new collaborative that is adding momentum and dimension to the county’s collective effort to improve health. In its first year, it will focus on tobacco use cessation and prevention, lowering high blood pressure rates, and creating healthy environments for children. The collaborative will leverage resources and relationships to attack these problems from several angles.

“We do lead the nation in terms of health services — now it’s time to lead the nation in terms of health.”

– Senator William Frist, MD,
Former Senate Majority Leader

- The [Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency \(MDHA\)](#) is working with community members to put public health at the center of the county's public housing redevelopment.
- In 2003, the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) created a statewide [Primary Prevention Initiative](#) to encourage employees to kick-start prevention initiatives in their communities. From designing park benches with antismoking messages to building community gardens, staff are going outside the health department's walls to get community members excited about making healthy choices.

Cross-Sector Partnerships

Nashville and Davidson County bring professionals together across sectors to improve the county's health. For example:

- The Tennessee Livability Collaborative is improving health and livability through a Health in All Policies approach — working with transportation, education, business, and other sectors to build healthy, prosperous communities.
- The [Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance](#) collaborates with MPHD and other academic institutions to support outreach activities in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

Existing Data Resources

Data collection is an important component of developing and implementing effective public health interventions. In Davidson County:

- The [Healthy Nashville Leadership Council](#) collected data on [over 100 indicators](#) during its community health improvement process and gathered input from different sectors to identify issues that are important to the community.
- The Tennessee Livability Collaborative connects businesses with local health data to inform their expansion plans.

"One of the most powerful things we can do to improve health is to weave health into the fabric of the city. It seems like now you have to be special to be healthy, but it should be pretty ordinary for people to live a long and healthy life."

– Bill Paul, MD, MPH,
Director, Metro Public Health
Department

Looking to the Future

Leaders from Nashville plan to continue their efforts to foster creative, productive partnerships between sectors that impact health — and ultimately, to improve health outcomes in the county. For example:

- Nashville's recent [Promise Zone designation](#) from President Obama will provide more opportunities and resources for collaboration in the community.
- Mayor Megan Barry's leadership supports creating healthy built environments.
- Leaders emphasized the importance of bringing community members to the table and working "with them, not for them." This aligns with a key component of Public Health 3.0 — empowering the community to participate in finding solutions to public health problems.

"We know we cannot treat our way out, but we can prevent our way out through primary upstream prevention."

– Leslie Meehan, Director of Primary Prevention, Tennessee Department of Health

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